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May Catholics Be Masons?

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FREEMASONRY, as we know it, began in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. The first Grand Lodge was organized in England in 1717. Twenty-one years later Pope Clement XII. issued a Bull of excommunication entitled "The Condemnation of the Society of Conventicles *de Liberi Muratori,* or of the Freemasons." [1] The reasons for the condemnation may be summarized as follows:

(1) Freemasonry has a peculiar "unsectarian," naturalistic character, by which theoretically and practically it undermines the Christian faith, first in its members and through them in the rest of society, creating religious indifferentism and contempt for orthodoxy and ecclesiastical authority.

(2) The inscrutable secrecy, and the oaths of secrecy and fidelity to Masonry and Masonic work, cannot be justified in their scope, their object, or their form, and cannot, therefore, induce any obligation.

(3) Such societies involve a grave danger for the security and tranquillity of the state and for the spiritual health of souls.

From the time of Clement XII. seven Supreme Pontiffs of the Catholic Church have repeated the condemnation of Freemasonry for substantially the same reasons.[2]

1"Bull" is the name of a particular kind of Papal document, so-called from the "bulla" or seal affixed thereto.

2See *Catholic Encyclopedia,* art. "Masonry," vol. ix., pp. 786, 787, for names of these Popes, names and dates of the condemnations, and summary of the reasons.

It is the purpose of this pamphlet to show that the objections made to Freemasonry nearly 200 years ago by Pope Clement XII. still hold at the present day. As Catholics were forbidden under pain of excommunication to affiliate themselves with the Masonic fraternity in 1738 and thereafter, so they are still forbidden, and on practically the same grounds. It is even possible to allege additional reasons peculiar to our age. Nevertheless, in a country like the United States, and possibly in several other countries, Catholic priests and laymen often number Freemasons among their friends, and in certain places Catholic societies and Masonic Lodges have fraternized to some extent. It is also true that hundreds of Masons have not the slightest feeling of bitterness or antagonism towards the Catholic Church, and will assure you in all honesty that they have never seen or heard anything in their Lodge against the Catholic religion or any other religion, and hence many find it hard to understand why the Church forbids Catholics to become Masons.

It is worth noting that other Christian churches also object to Masonry. In fact up to sixty years ago most of them did. Even at the present day "between orthodox Lutheranism and the large rationalistic section of Germanic Masonry the mutual antipathy is strong, not to say bitter, as represented, for instance, by the radical 'Humanitarian' Grand Lodges and the aggressive Verein deutscher Freimauer."[8]

[8]Cooper, "Freemasonry, State and Church." *The Ecclesiastical Review*, July, 1917, p. 60.

I.

Masonry and Religion

One should bear in mind that large numbers of "lodge-members," especially in English-speaking countries, have not the slightest interest in the philosophy of Masonry, and perhaps have never read the works of prominent members of the fraternity who profess to interpret true Masonic ideas and ideals. But the Catholic Church and every other non-Masonic organization or individual can fairly judge Freemasonry only by its "Constitutions," by its official magazines, and by the writings of Masons who stand high in the ranks of their brethren. On the evidence of this testimony there can hardly be any doubt that Masonry promotes religious indifferentism. Now indifferentism is the greatest enemy of the Catholic Church, and, indeed, of every Christian Church; for if it makes no difference what a man believes, why believe anything? If it make no difference to what Church a man belongs, why belong to any?

The first article of the "Old Charges" incorporated in the "Constitutions" (text of 1738,—the very year of Pope Clement's condemnation), shows this tendency. It states: "In ancient times the Christian Masons were charged to comply with the Christian usages of each country where they traveled or worked: but Masonry being found in all nations, even of diverse religions, they are now generally charged to ad-

here to that religion in which all men agree." Is there any religion in which all men agree?

In the same "Charge" the Brothers are urged "to be good men and true, men of honor and honesty, by whatever names, religions, or persuasions they may be distinguished, for they all agree in the three great articles of Noah, enough to preserve the cement of the lodge." The articles of Noah refer to a time not only pre-Christian but pre-Mosaic, to that time in the history of the human race when it was undivided either racially or religiously. The "three articles" may mean "the duties towards God, the neighbor and himself," or may refer to "brotherly love, relief, and truth."[4] Here is the very essence of indifference to revealed Christian dogmas. How can the Catholic Church, teaching, as she does, that she is the "pillar and the ground of the truth" given to the world by Jesus Christ, permit her children to belong to a society whose official pronouncements undermine the very foundation of that truth?

Moreover, it is unquestionable that in some parts of the world, Masonry has displayed a marked hostility to the Catholic Church. Here we must note a distinction between Latin countries and what, for convenience, we may call Anglo-Saxon countries. In Portugal, for example, a republic was established in 1910 largely by Masons. Living under a successful republican form of government ourselves, we may consider that was a worthy and patriotic achievement. But note some of the articles in the Constitution drawn up for the new republic under Masonic in-

[4] *Catholic Encyclopedia*, ix., p. 773.

fluence as competent authorities both Masonic and non-Masonic agree.[5]

"Ministers of religion shall have no part in the parochial lay corporations or associations in charge of temporal affairs. A minister of religion who criticizes or attacks any of the acts of a public authority or the form of government or the laws of the Republic or any of the provisions of the present law will be punishable by law. Church property shall belong to the State, but shall be loaned to the Church. The wearing of the clerical habit outside of the churches and ceremonies is prohibited. It is also prohibited to publish in any way by word or deed, any bulls, decrees, or communications from the Roman Curia, or prelates, or others, without explicit permission from the civil authorities. The State will have charge of naming and approving the professors in ecclesiastical seminaries for the training of priests and will determine the text-books and courses of study therein. No Jesuits or other monastic orders or religious congregations shall be admitted into Portuguese territory. All Jesuits, whether aliens, naturalized citizens, or natives, are expelled, and all their real or personal property is confiscated. As for the members of other religious orders, if they are aliens or naturalized citizens, they are likewise to be expelled, and if they are natives, they must return to secular life, or at least may not live in community, and shall not be allowed to exercise the teaching profession or intervene in any way in education."[6]

[5]*The Ecclesiastical Review*, art. "Freemasonry, State, and Church," July, 1917, pp. 48, 49, by Rev. John M. Cooper.
[6]Cooper, *op. cit.*, pp. 63, 64.

What has been done during this year, 1926, in Mexico, seems to follow quite literally along the lines of the Portuguese Constitution of 1910. "The Mexican Constitution of 1857 was largely the work of Masons, while the more recent Constitution promulgated February 5, 1917, apparently with Masonic approval and coöperation, is in its politico-religious sections almost identical with the Portuguese—only more so!"[7] The laws of Calles in 1926, go even beyond the provisions of the Constitution of 1917.

The story of Masonry in France is well known. "In 1893 the Convention or general meeting declared that none were eligible for the Council of the Order—which serves as its Executive—unless they had pledged themselves to abstain from all religious rites, themselves and their dependents. And it has been repeatedly asserted, as by Mayoux and others, that no orthodox believer, Catholic, Protestant, or Jew, could be a sincere Freemason in France."[8] They were not content with ruling religion out of their own lives, they strove to penalize those who practised the Catholic religion. Witness the scandals in the army uncovered early in the present century; the infamous "index slips" of the officers kept by the "Grand Lodge," in which a man's "qualifications" for advancement were listed. Did he go to Mass, or allow his wife and children to go? Did he send his children to a Catholic school, or did he encourage his soldiers to go to church? No matter what his merits as a soldier, if he was guilty of these "crimes" he was

[7]Cooper, *op. cit.*

[8]Very Rev. Canon William Barry, D.D., *National Review* (English), "Freemasons in France," July, 1905.

kept in the least favorable quarters or dispatched to Central Africa; other officers, favorably listed in the "fiches" (index slips), passed over his head to higher rank, but he could secure no promotion. This conspiracy went on for four years, from 1901 to 1904; over 18,000 officers were denounced by the "Grand Orient;" the evidence for all this has been published with photographed copies of the "charges."[9]

But if this type of anti-Catholic bigotry is confined to Latin countries, why object to Masonry here in the United States? Is it not unfair to hold American Masons responsible for what is said and done by European or Mexican Masons?

Of course it would be, but we do not hold them responsible. Nevertheless, they belong to the same organization. It is true that in the past, Lodges in England and in this country have repudiated the philosophy of their brethren in France, and have condemned their atheism and irreligion. But there is a decided drift the other way at least among the Masons of the Scottish Rite in this country. In 1917 the Grand Lodge of California adopted resolutions on this point: "Whereas," they said, "it is preëminently desirable that the 'Universality of Freemasonry,' no less than the 'Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man,' shall be something more than an empty phrase, . . . Now, therefore, be it resolved, that a special committee of five members of this Grand Lodge be appointed by the Grand Master to report at the next annual communication some plan whereby, if possible, the breach between French and

[9]Barry, *op. cit.*

Anglo-Saxon Masonry may be healed without the sacrifice on either side of any essential principle or matter of conscience; and be it further resolved, that any inhibition upon the right of visitation heretofore imposed by this Grand Lodge be, and the same hereby is, modified in so far as it may be necessary to allow and permit our brethren to hold Masonic intercourse with the Masons of France, Belgium and Italy, and to visit any of the lodges."[10]

The official magazine of the Thirty-third Degree, Scottish Rite, Southern Juridiction, entitled *The New Age* and published in Washington, D. C., commenting on these resolutions in November, 1917, said: "We have never been able to get out of our mind the idea that Freemasonry in this country has been too quick to credit the assertions of the Jesuits (!), and others of the Roman Hierarchy, and too slow to listen to any explanations or reasons offered by Latin Masons concerning the matters in dispute between them and our own brethren. And, in this world crisis that has come upon us, it seems to us that it behooves us all to forget our differences, so far, at least, as to allow us to get the whole of Freemasonry together and act together intelligently and harmoniously for the good of the whole world."[11] Incidentally the Grand Lodges of Massachusetts, and of Texas, Kentucky and Georgia, have also endorsed the Grand Orient of France. It is constantly maintained by Masonic authorities that Masonry is one, not in rite or in government, but "the doctrine of Freemasonry

[10]Quoted in *Our Sunday Visitor*, April 29, 1923.

[11]*Ibid.*

is everywhere the same. It is the body which is unchangeable—remaining always the same. The science and philosophy, the symbolism and the religion of Freemasonry continue, and will continue, to be the same, wherever true Masonry is practised."[12]

Unfortunately, it is likewise true that even in the writings of American Masons, and in such Masonic magazines as *The New Age*, referred to above, and *The American Freemason*, for Blue Lodge members, we find ample evidence of antagonism to Catholic Christianity. Particularly is this true of the Scottish Rite. This branch of American Freemasonry admitted responsibility for sponsoring the anti-parochial school bill in Oregon in 1922. Its paper, *The New Age*, constantly publishes vicious diatribes against the Catholic Church.

In 1881 appeared the well-known book of Albert Pike, "Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Prepared for the Supreme Council of the Thirty-third Degree for the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States, and Published by its Authority." "An Encyclopedia of Freemasonry and its Kindred Sciences: Comprising the Whole Range of Arts, Sciences and Literature as Connected with the Institution," appeared in Philadelphia in 1906, and was the work of Albert G. Mackey, M.D. Dr. Mackey is also the author of "The Symbolism of Freemasonry: Illustrating and Explaining Its Science and Philosophy, Its Legends, Myths, and Symbols." All three of these books contain explanations of the Nature of God, the his-

12Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, p. 650.

toric truth of the Sacred Scriptures, and of revered symbols like the Cross and the letters I. N. R. I. that must shock the religious sensibilities of believing Christians.[13]

The "true" meaning of Masonic symbols is not the one usually assigned by Christian believers, but rather is to be found in the pagan mysteries, or in pre-Christian religions. (See quotations given by Preuss on this subject, "American Freemasonry," pages 45-52.) Furthermore, when we find the authenticity of the Gospels and the Divinity of Jesus Christ treated as they are by representative Masons, it must also be clear to anyone that when men say there is nothing offensive to Catholicity in Masonry, they either do not know the Catholic Church, or they do not know Masonry. Albert Pike writes as follows:

"Jerusalem . . . had at length in its turn lost the Holy Word, when a Prophet, announced to the Magi by the consecrated star of Initiation (note the Masonic interpretation), came to rend asunder the worn veil of the Temple, in order to give to the Church *a new tissue of legends and symbols* that still and ever conceals from the profane and ever preserves to the elect, the same truths."[14] The Elect, of course, are Masons; the truth of the Gospels hidden in its "legends and symbols" cannot be perceived by the "profane," *i. e.,* those who are not Masons.

"This is the New Law, the Word for which the world had waited and pined so long; and every true

[13]Mackey, "Symbolism," pp. 187-189; *Encyclopedia,* p. 390; Pike, *Morals and Dogma,* pp. 574, 757, 771; on the nature of God.

[14]*Morals and Dogma,* p. 208.

Knight of the Rose (the Rose Croix degree), will revere the memory of Him Who taught it, and look indulgently on those who assign to Him a character far above His own conceptions or belief, even to the extent of deeming Him divine."[15] The very cornerstone of Orthodox Christianity, Catholic and Protestant, is the Divinity of Christ. What fellowship can we hold with those who look upon us "indulgently" for this belief which is an essential part of our Christian faith? But it is of the very nature of Freemasonry to be "broad" in its religious philosophy. "Masonry propagates no creed," says the same author, "except its own most simple and sublime one taught by Nature and Reason. *There has never been a false religion in the world.* The permanent one universal revelation is written in visible Nature and explained by the reason and is completed by the wise analogies of faith. There is but one true religion, one dogma, one legitimate belief."[16]

Another short paragraph from *Morals and Dogma* is a sort of commentary on this amazing statement that "there has never been a false religion in the world." "Catholicism," says Albert Pike, "was a vital truth in its earliest ages, but it became obsolete, and Protestantism arose, flourished, and deteriorated. The doctrines of Zoroaster were the best which the ancient Persians were fitted to receive; those of Confucius were fitted for the Chinese; those of Mohammed for the idolatrous Arabs of his age. *Each*

15*Ibid.* p. 310.

16Pike, *The Inner Sanctuary*, I., 271; quoted in *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Ix., 779, 780.

was Truth for the time. Each was a Gospel preached by a Reformer; and if any men are so little fortunate as to remain content therewith, when others have attained a higher truth"—of course, this higher truth is Masonry—"it is their misfortune and not their fault. They are to be pitied for it and not persecuted."[17]

This is the idea stated over and over again by representative Masonic writers, not only in Italy, France and Mexico, but in these United States. "Masonry is THE TRUTH." You may be a Christian, a Hindu, a Jew, a Mohammedan,—any religion is "true," when interpreted in terms of Freemasonry. Perhaps we can see now why Pope Clement XII. accused the fraternity of having an unsectarian, naturalistic character. A Catholic of the twentieth century cannot agree (and remain a Catholic), that the truth of his religion became "obsolete" in the fourth or fifth century. A Protestant, if he is logical, should not remain a Protestant, if Protestantism has "deteriorated."

The question whether or not Masonry is a religion is much disputed by Masons themselves. We have seen at any rate, that Masonic literature has decided views on religion, and pretends to interpret religion. Surely no Catholic will have his religion interpreted for him except by those whom he believes are divinely appointed to do so. We believe that our Church has been founded by Jesus Christ, the Son of God, that He delegated His teaching authority to a group of men who speak in His Name with infallible certainty.

[17]Page 38, quoted by Preuss, *op. cit.*, p. 249.

This much we are sure of: that Masonry has the outward semblance of a religion; and that it has an elaborate ritual in large part couched in religious terms. We know, too, that for hundreds of men, Masonry is the only religion they practise; they say so: "Masonry is religion enough for us."

Some little light is thrown on this phase of the subject by a case brought before the Court of Appeals of New York, in 1905. Robert Kopp, one time Master of the Lodge of Strict Observance, No. 94, was expelled from the fraternity for an insulting letter he wrote to the Grand Master of the State. For six years he fought to be reinstated, and finally the case came to the Court of Appeals. Elburt Crandall, the lawyer for the Grand Lodge, protested the right of the court to interfere. He said: "The right to membership in the Masonic fraternity is very much like the right to membership in a church. Each requires a candidate for admission to subscribe to certain articles of religious belief, as an essential prerequisite to membership. The precepts contained in 'The Landmarks and the Charges of a Freemason' formulate a creed so thoroughly religious in character, that it may well be compared with the formally expressed doctrines of many a denominational church. That the right of membership is not a right of which a civil court will take cognizance has been frequently adjudicated. The civil courts cannot decide who ought to be members of the church, nor whether the excommunicated have been, justly or unjustly, cut off from the body of the church."[18]

[18]Kopp vs. White, 30 Civil Procedure Reports, 352.

If it is true that Masonry has a creed "so thoroughly religious in character that it may well be compared with the formally expressed doctrines of many a denominational church," then there is precisely the same reason why a Catholic may not be a Mason, as there is that a Catholic may not be a Lutheran or a Baptist,—if he wishes to remain a Catholic.

It seems clear, therefore, that the position of the Catholic Church on the question of Freemasonry is quite justified on the religious issue alone. Whatever may be the views of individual Masons, even hundreds of them, however friendly whole groups of them may be to the Church, Freemasonry, as a Society, as a System, is antagonistic to the first principles of the Church. This is clearly shown by the official declarations of the Lodges, and the publications of representative Masons.

II.

The Masonic Oath.

The second reason given by Pope Clement XII. for his condemnation of Masonry in the eighteenth century was the inscrutable secrecy and the oaths binding to this secrecy practised in the Fraternity. The oath of secrecy "still remains an integral part of the system of Freemasonry; indeed, it is renewed in varying forms in the initiation ceremony of each successive degree. Through Clement XII.'s Constitution and the Bulls of many subsequent Pontiffs the Church pronounces such an oath to be immoral in principle. It is imposed by an authority which has no adequate sanction, differing in that respect from the oath exacted, for example, by a magistrate, a judge, or an ecclesiastical superior who are in their varying degrees the representatives of the commonwealth or of God."[19]

There are many societies which have secrets, and which the Church does not condemn. College fraternities have secrets. The Knights of Columbus have secrets. It is the nature of the oath of secrecy and the claim that it admits of no exception which make the Masonic oath objectionable. The following oath is taken from the manual of the English lodges: "I (name), in the presence of the Great Architect of the Universe—do hereby and hereon

[19]Rev. Herbert Thurston, S.J., *Freemasonry*, p. 7, C. T. S. Publication.

most solemnly and sincerely swear that I will always hale (*i. e.*, keep secret), conceal, and never reveal any part or parts, point or points, of the secrets and mysteries of or belonging to Masons; what have been, shall now, or may hereafter be communicated to me,—on no less a penalty, on the violation of any of them, than to have my throat cut across, my tongue torn out by the root. So help me God!"[20]

Three fundamental objections may be made to an oath of this kind: (a) Masonry has no right to impose it; (b) the candidate binds himself to secrecy as regards things not yet made known to him; (c) no one has the lawful right to impose the sentence for breaking the oath.

The principles of Catholic teaching about oaths are very simple. There is a Command of God that we must not take His Holy Name in vain, and therefore the Church insists that certain conditions must be fulfilled before it is licit to take an oath. The first is, that we must give careful consideration to the necessity and utility of the oath, for to swear without a sufficient reason is obviously a "vain" use of God's Name. Then we must be sure of the truth of what we say; and, finally, if we promise something under oath, we must be sure we may lawfully do the thing promised.

The Masonic oath violates all of these principles. There is no necessity for the oath, for, "to look at the matter sensibly," says Dr. Cooper, "what secrets of importance, after all, could (high-

[20]Quoted by Rev. C. Coppens, S.J., "The Laws of the Church with Regard to Secret Societies," in *American Catholic Quarterly Review*, v., 245.

degree) Masonry possess in this day of education and culture? Philosophical or scientific secrets? No historian of philosophy or of science could easily be persuaded of this. Secret practical aims? But, as I shall try to make clear, these aims are an open book to anyone with sufficient library facilities who cares to take the time to investigate."[21] If there is nothing to conceal, why conceal it? Is the whole thing merely a grotesque jest to impress the candidate with an empty solemnity? Is it merely play-acting when he generously offers to have his throat cut and his tongue torn out if he breaks the oath? Suppose he does break it who is to execute the self-imposed sentence? Has Masonry power of life and death over its members? If it has not, then what do the words mean? If they mean nothing, then it is wrong to use God's Name as a seal for such an oath. If they are to be taken literally then Masonry is clearly usurping an essential prerogative of the State.

Furthermore, a man cannot be sure of the truth of Masonic teaching, he cannot be sure he will be able to fulfill Masonic obligations, when he does not yet know that teaching or those obligations. The oath expressly states that the candidate binds himself to absolute secrecy even as to things which "may hereafter be communicated" to him. What are those

21The *Ecclesiastical Review*, June, 1917, p. 598; "Masonry's Two Hundredth Birthday." On this same page Dr. Cooper states that he has had access "to several thousand volumes of Masonic literature, the majority of them representing Anglo-Saxon Masonry. This and the succeeding articles (July and August) are based on a study of a selected list of about two hundred of the more important works and articles."

things? He has no means of knowing until he is admitted to the higher degrees, if he ever is. It is maintained by Albert Pike that "the Masonry of the higher degrees teaches the great truths of intellectual science; but as to these, even as to the rudiments and first principles, Blue Masonry is absolutely dumb."[22]

It is true, of course, as Dr. Cooper says, that there can be no secrets of any importance in any of the degrees of Masonry. "The great truths of intellectual science" are certainly not confined to Thirty-Third degree Masons in this twentieth century. It is ridiculous to make any such claim. But at the same time it is unethical and immoral to deceive candidates as to these supposed "great truths" when they are under a terrible oath to keep secret what shall be revealed to them in higher degrees.

That this is done we know from the same author: "The Blue Degrees," says Albert Pike, "are but the outer court or portico of the Temple. Part of the symbols are displayed there to the Initiate, but he is intentionally misled by false interpretations. It is not intended that he shall understand them; but it is intended that he shall imagine he understands them. Their true explication is reserved for the Adepts, the Princes of Masonry. The whole body of the Royal and Sacerdotal Art was hidden so carefully, centuries since, in the High Degrees, as that it is even yet impossible to solve many of the enigmas which they contain. It is well enough for the mass of those called Masons to imagine that all is contained in the Blue Degrees; and

[22]Quoted in *Our Sunday Visitor*, April 29, 1923.

whoso attempts to undeceive them will labor in vain, and without any true reward violate his obligations as an Adept. Masonry is the veritable Sphinx, buried to the head in the sands heaped round it by the ages."[23]

Here are some illuminating statements truly. "The mass of those called Masons" are the thousands of lodge members in the lower degrees who have no interest in going higher; they are content that they have been admitted to the Fraternity and are entitled to call themselves Masons. But "they are intentionally misled by false interpretations," and therefore know not what their brother Masons in higher degrees know, and these latter violate their oath if they try to enlighten them. Masons are very apt to become indignant if we tell them they do not know what Masonry means. The greatest Masonic authority that ever lived in the United States says this is so, and we believe *he* knows what Masonry means.

A personal experience may give point to this statement. In a friendly discussion with a man who was past master of a Lodge in New York and who had been a member of the Grand Lodge of the State, I called attention to some particularly violent attacks on the Catholic Church and on Religion in general, that had appeared in *The New Age* and in other Masonic publications. He was fair enough to say when he had verified my quotations, that what he read,—I quote him exactly,—"gave me quite a shock, for I

[23] *Morals and Dogma*, p. 819, quoted by Preuss, pp. 12, 13.

had not dreamed that any Mason or body of Masons, or any publication concerning Masonry in the United States of America had ever been guilty of the sentiments mentioned." He had been of the opinion, as so many others are, that the Catholic Church was narrow because she would not permit her members to become Masons, and that the Church entirely misunderstood Masonry. The fact is that it is Masons, many hundreds of them, who misunderstand Masonry.

One other statement in the last quotation from Albert Pike's book calls for a word of comment. He intimates that Freemasonry is very ancient; its secrets were hidden "centuries since, in the High Degrees." That is pure legend without a shred of history to support it. Most preposterous and extravagant claims have been advanced for the antiquity of the Fraternity. "We may trace this very institution," says Albert G. Mackey, "with an older but not dissimilar form, in the Masonic guilds of Europe; in the corporations of the Stone-masons of Germany; in the traveling Freemasons of the Middle Ages, and connect it with the Colleges of Architects of Rome."[24]

It is a slight strain on one's credulity to be asked to believe that the Builders' Guilds of the Middle Ages, which erected the magnificent Gothic Cathedrals of Europe, that produced the Mystery and Morality Plays to give expression to faith in God's Revelation and their love for Jesus Christ and the Saints, that these same Catholics practised symbolic

[24] *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, p. 297, quoted by Preuss, p. 347.

rites which we are told have their truest and most authentic interpretation in the ancient Pagan Mysteries.

But why stop at the Middle Ages? Other Masonic writers claim King Solomon as their "first Most Excellent Grand Master!"[25] and there are still others whose theory it is "that the principles of the Pure or Primitive Freemasonry were preserved in the race of Seth!"[26] What is termed by some "the revival of Masonry in the eighteenth century" is really the *beginning* of speculative Masonry, the international society, that we are familiar with in our day. Its own better historians of the last fifty years admit Masonry was born when the Grand Lodge was established in England, June 24, 1717.[27]

[25] *Ritualist*, p. 61, quoted by Preuss, p. 135.
[26] *Encyclopedia*, p. 708, quoted by Preuss, p. 350.
[27] Cooper, *op. cit.*, June, 1917, p. 591.

III.

Masonry and the State.

The last reason given by Pope Clement XII. for his condemnation of Freemasonry was the danger which such societies involve for the security and tranquillity of the state. The Pope was by no means alone in seeing this danger. Before he took any action against the organization the Protestant Governments of Holland (1735), Sweden, and Geneva (1738), had all taken measures to prohibit Masonry. These were followed by Zurich (1740), and Berne (1745). Events have proved conclusively that much mischief has been done in the various countries of Europe to say nothing of Mexico and South America by Masonic plots against the established governments. "It was in the great meeting of the Freemasons in Frankfurt-on-Main, three years before the (French) Revolution began, that the death of Louis XVI. and Gustavus III. of Sweden was first planned."[28] In later revolutionary movements in France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and even as recently as the Young Turkish revolt, the Lodges took an active part, as their own members testified and as non-Masonic historians were able to prove.[29]

By their very nature, secret societies lend themselves to plotting, especially when they have a definite philosophy as Masonry has. We have already referred to the scandalous injustice perpetrated by the Grand Orient against Catholic officers in the French Army. Was that patriotism? Was it seeking the best interests of their country to prevent capable sol-

[28] Webster, *The French Revolution*, quoted by Thurston, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

[29] *Catholic Encyclopedia*, ix., 781.

diers from securing positions of command and authority simply because they were not Masons?[30]

Professor John Robison, a Mason of the more moderate English type, was so scandalized by what he had seen and heard in Continental Masonic Lodges that he wrote a book condemning them, entitled, *Proofs of a Conspiracy Against All the Religions and Governments of Europe,* in which he says: "Not only are secret societies dangerous, but all societies whose object is mysterious. The whole history of man is a proof of this position. In no age or country has there ever appeared a mysterious association which did not in time become a public nuisance." And again: "In every quarter of Europe where Freemasonry has been established the Lodges have become hotbeds of public mischief."[31]

Right in our own day the activities of Continental Masons indicate a spirit that is a menace to the stability of European nations and international peace. In a recent article, Rev. Herbert Thurston, whom we have quoted above, says: "To anyone who will take the trouble to investigate the recent activities of continental Masonry, even only so far as they are recorded in Masonic journals and the published proceedings of Conventions, etc., the fact at once becomes plain that an immense effort is being made to break down national barriers, entirely in the interest of a future Universal Republic of Masonry, which is to follow in the footsteps of the French Revolution. At the banquet celebrated in connection with the Con-

[30] *Supra,* pp. 6, 7.

[31] Quoted by Thurston, pp. 8, 9.

vention of 1923, the President of the General Assembly of the Grand Orient proposed a toast which was received with enthusiastic applause: 'To the French Republic, the daughter of French Masonry; to the Universal Republic of tomorrow the daughter of Universal Masonry.' In view of this consummation the leading spirits of the Craft, finding a convenient stronghold in Switzerland, have strained every nerve to bring about the cordial cooperation of the Masons of France, Belgium, Italy, etc., with those of Central Europe, and more especially to break through the ban decreed against the Grand Orient by their brethren of English speech. They would fain make the League of Nations their tool in realizing the project of a godless universal republic; though, so far, they have happily met with scant success in any of these designs. Still the cry of the brotherhood of man is a specious one and the danger cannot be ignored."[32]

Perhaps, after all, the Popes have been right. Even so wise a diplomat as Pope Leo XIII. in his condemnation of Masonry said of it, that "it has succeeded in entering all classes of society, and forms an invisible and irresponsible state existing within the legitimate state." For this reason, then, as well as for the two reasons already explained, namely, that Masonry is unsectarian and naturalistic in its religious philosophy, thus inducing religious indifferentism; and because its oath is objectionable from the viewpoint of Catholic teaching, no Catholic may be a Mason.

[32]Thurston, "The Church's International Enemy," in *The Month*, November, 1926, p. 394.

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